

Pamph
A
LETTER 3
TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
EDMUND BURKE,
IN ANSWER

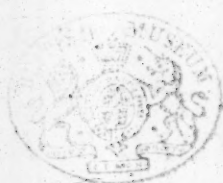
TO A
LETTER
RESPECTING
THE DUKE OF BEDFORD
AND THE
EARL OF LAUDERDALE;
TO WHICH IS APPENDED
SOME ANTICIPATION OF MR. BURKE'S THOUGHTS
ON A
REGICIDE PEACE.

Audi alteram partem.

BY THE REV. GEORGE NEALE,
AUTHOR OF ESSAYS ON MODERN MANNERS, &c. &c.

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MDCCXCVI.



A LETTER, &c.

SIR,

YOUR Pamphlet against the Duke of Bedford and the Earl of Lauderdale, without approving of its constituent parts, I have perused with pleasure. It is an effort of genius, although angry and perturbed; genius, however, whether falsely or justly directed, like the pleadings of a Thurlow or an Erskine, has always commanded my esteem.

Thus far I speak without a compliment. I wish I could proceed in the same style; but I really am of opinion, and common justice induces me to avow it, that the whole of your argument, as far as it respects his Grace of Bedford, (for the Earl of Lauderdale is but slightly glanced at,) is founded in error. No

just parallel, permit me to remark, in a pensioned point of view, can be made between you. His Grace *is not pensioned; you confessedly are*. What his ancestor was, is totally irrelevant to the purpose. The living and the dead are distinct and divided objects. They cannot, they ought not to be united. Besides, Sir, *de mortuis nil nisi bonum*, is an old, and generally a just, adage. It is founded in charity, it is sanctioned by good manners, it is made almost impenetrable and imprescriptible by the applauding voice of time.

But although a parallel, such as you have attempted, cannot be allowed between his Grace of Bedford and yourself, yet such a thing, I think, (and I shall try the experiment by and by,) might take place between you and me. In the mean time, as I am not over fond of egotism, I will take other ground. I will substitute an originally poor but literary Priest, (whom I know you despise while he be such, let his abilities be ever so great) and bring him into contrast with yourself. I will pit him, I say, both as priest and author, (but undignified by birth, and unpatronized at first, perhaps, in the church,) against you, and look only to the progress of your career. You,
Sir,

Sir, was originally a senator of the British Parliament, without being a Member of the House of Lords; he an humble priest, without a seat among the Bench of Bishops. You were therefore neither of you more than unpensioned commoners, (let a Bishop of Rochester in futuro stand for my instance,) nor, although you might be styled professional men in your respective places, were you any thing more than individuals among the whole? Suppose then, when you obtain a pension, my poor priest is conducted to the emoluments of a bishoprick, for some services which are mutually implied. Suppose further, Sir, that he and you had quarrelled about the maximum of respective merits and compensation, and the dispute was brought forward to public view. This, under my admitted, (for the sake of argument) but far different mode of pension, might animate each to prove, as much as possible, his own deserts. Upon what then, you might ask him, or he you, (for self-love and self-praise and self-assumption of merit and abilities are alike congenial to all who have profited by them,) upon what are his successes founded?—And here, as you have more emblazoned your services in the splendour

splendour of declamation than in point of fact, so, until you be more explicit, circumstantial, and precise in the argument, I will weigh only against given weight; premising only (excuse the tautology of the word *only*) that any clergyman, in my poor judgment, may be as useful to his fellow creatures in his way, although unstalled and unpenioned, as a Bishop Horsley, or even a *Cidevant* senator Burke himself.

What then has he to boast of in substantiation of what he possesses in an ecclesiastical douceur to put him upon a footing with yourself? I answer, with you, merit. Formerly, in this land of genius and variegated literature, I might, I certainly should have blushed at such an answer: but your example sanctifies, as far as mere example can, such a reply. Upon this then let issue be joined.

You, Sir, have been in parliament, he in the church. I may fairly suppose your motives were in a state of reciprocity; that is to say, while you each thought yourselves qualified to do good to some part of your fellow creatures, although it were only to the dignified and opulent, (*odi profanum vulgus et arceo*) you did not mean to forget yourselves. The

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otium cum dignitate, whether it were to flutter before your eyes respectively in lawn sleeves and church land, or in the appendages of a "Right Honourable Edmund," and a comfortable pension, did not escape your notice. Leaving it to you to admit or reject this statement, I confess, to the eternal shame or credit of all priests, of which order (unworthily perhaps) I am one, (for Voltaire has indiscriminately described them as impervious to any personal confessions of frailty or crime,) I should plead guilty to my own indictment.

Now then, what follows? You plead your own merits; so may he. In what do they differ, but in difference of station and object? You, I repeat, was a single senator, he an humble churchman; you attended the Commons-house at stated periods, so did he the church. You composed writings under the happy and self-elevating idea of being useful, when something apparently great, or dazzling, or necessary in an instructive point of view, was at stake; so did he. Here then a parallel might have held, you being both *new men*, and both *selected recently from among the mass of the people*. But as to his Grace of Bedford, if
long

long tenure constitute, as I believe it does, prescription both in law and fact, neither his nobility or possessions can come in contrast with what you have so recently obtained.

But be this as it may; I come now to more important matter. I come now to prove unequivocally, that you have taken ground against the Duke of Bedford, which you ought not to have taken; or, in other words, that his Grace's ancestors, so far as he be concerned, have nothing properly relevant to be placed in contrast with your pension.

And here I must again repeat, his Grace of Bedford is not *a pensioner*, and you most certainly are: indeed you avow it yourself. Now whether any or all of his ancestors, as I before observed, were, is not in the least to the purpose. It cannot come into the enquiry; it cannot be attached to him. Your ancestors also are equally acquitted; for a pension is, excuse a Gallicism for once, among the number of things to be rated as "one and indivisible" in its object. It is for personal services, not for such as are derivative; and its surplus, whether it afterwards go to a son or a daughter, to a fool or a wise man, in part or in whole,

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in a lineal or transverse line, is to be regarded in no other light than any other heritable or bequested property. The residuum, in short, is in the pensioners will. But, in your point of view, *all the Lords of Parliament, the Ministry themselves, and most of the English gentry*, if their forefathers were ever pensioned, may now be styled *pensioners*. It is either a matter of fact, and you have as great a right to drag them forth into that point of view as the Duke of Bedford, or you must have been mistaken in your mode of argument. For which of them, going back to the founders of their respective families, if they have been at all engaged in the public service, but have derived some kind of grant (and pensions and grants are synonymous terms) from the crown? I allow indeed, as well as you, the crown to be the fountain of remuneration and honour: but only so far as it is pleased specifically to express: I allow that the crown, like any wealthy individual making a will, may pension as many lives, by transmission or immediate enjoyment, as it pleases. Thus, if I had fifty children, they might all be pensioned in the ratio of primogeniture, or otherwise. But, if no entail be made, if no such specification

take place, then, as with the services it means to reward, *it is truly and strictly personal*. And, if a man, instead of three thousand seven hundred, have fifty thousand a year to his proper use, and, in the lawyer's phrase, for and during only the term of his natural life, his immediate descendants may become beggars. For, if the founder game or sultanate (or even hoard, hating his legitimate offspring, and such things have been) it is all in his good pleasure how to act, and whether to give or withhold. I do not indeed remember any dictation in respect to what thus, as well as the cause of pension, becomes entirely personal, nor do I really think that it ought. The profits of the brain are as fair, (and that is your avowed style of excellence) if fairly obtained, as any other kind of speculation; and the man of literature, even of state-literature, differs from the merchant only in name and in a diversity of manufacture.

But, Sir, if your doctrine be true and the application of it be just, even *pensions* might soon be written down. I indeed have no such intention; yet, if I be not greatly deceived, I can easily demonstrate how it might, in part, be atchieved. Take but the course
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which you have, *unjustly indeed in every point of view*, taken with his Grace's ancestors of Bedford, and few delicate, few parental persons of high-bred transmissive honour (far above all pensions) would chuse to accept them. Even the desire of providing for an infant family, (laudable indeed in all men) would lose its stimulus; for although they might not feel for themselves on their own ground of integrity or desert, yet the idea, to use nearly your own expression, of "unplumbing the dead for bullets to assassinate the living," (page 5) not merely of one sepulchre, but from century to century, from age to ages, in contrast with any new pensioner of the day: the certainty, or at least probability, that no blood, or genius, or goodness, or talents flow in the same uninterrupted channel: the fear that one black sheep, *his skin turned by nature* or by the sophistry and arts of any historian, new or old, might be selected from a numerous and noble breed—these, if expected to be a perpetual tax upon pensions, would soon make pensions only dear to the meanest, the most selfish, if not the least virtuous among the sons of men.

But, in saying this, do I mean it should be applicable to the noble house of Bedford? By no means. I know of no degeneracy among them. They want not my feeble pen. If they had—I would not have answered you for them in the first instance, but I would roundly have asserted of myself, as a being of one common race, that if my father, or any, or all of my ancestry were public defaulters (although I rejoice that no such thing obtains) it ought not, it could not, justly, be imputed to me.

With respect, Sir, to the justice of your pension, or whether it be more or less than you deserve, I have little, at present, to observe. I can neither enlarge nor lessen it: I wish not to do either; nor have I made politics so particular a branch of my studies, as to appreciate or depreciate your political worth. It appears, however to me, as well as to the Duke of Bedford, if I may be allowed to *think* with his Grace (abstractedly considered from Mr. Burke as the possessor) as of no common magnitude. This opinion also I should not have disclosed (for I am not personally your, or any man's enemy) but that you seem to grudge what you are pleased to
call

call "the enormous pension of his Grace the Duke of Bedford.

"The Duke of Bedford," say you, "is the Leviathan among all the creatures of the crown."—I do not love to separate a text from a context, but you will pardon me if, for the sake of information, I here presume to ask what you mean by this phrase. "Creatures of the crown! A Leviathan among them?"—What are they? Are all *pensioned* men of this description—and, if so, in what light are they to be considered? Are they free men or vassals? Have they a will of their own, or do they blindly and implicitly follow the dictates and decrees of the crown?—If this be the definition of the term "creatures," I am sure (and you too may safely confess) his Grace is no Leviathan among them: if this be the criterion of a pensionary, his Grace himself, I trust, will pardon me for not allowing him even the rank of a perrywinkle among so compliant, so truly a court-finished tribe of aquatics as you have been pleased to delineate.

"He tumbles about (page 37) his unwieldy bulk, and frolicks in the ocean of royal bounty."—Here again I must beg leave to digress. The Duke of Bedford, if he is not a
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creature of the crown (and I am sure he is not according to your definition) can make no frolicks such as you describe. "Huge as he is, and while he lies floating many a rood," (I do not indeed understand perfectly the metaphor as applied) yet, if he be still a creature, it is one of his own independent class and form. His frolicks (and young, and unfouled, and untainted by hypocrisy as, I trust, he is, he may have *frolicks*) are nevertheless his own. He pays for them himself. He waits for no arrears of pension, from the civil, or any other list, but discharges them as soon as they be incurred.—But, to spare further labour upon this part of the argument, I am inclined to believe, abstracted from a false notion of self defence, that those things were to you perfectly indifferent. You cared not for his frolicks, you cared not for his estates, you cared not whether he was a Leviathan, of what you are pleased to term royal bounty, or a mere perrywinkle in the fathomless deep. I am justified in this idea even by yourself. "Had he," (say you, page 39) "permitted me to remain in quiet, I should have said 'tis his estate; that's enough. It is his by law, what have I to do with it or its history? He would naturally

rally have said on his side" (this is indeed the retort courteous by anticipation) "'tis this man's fortune. He is as good now, as my ancestor was two hundred and fifty years ago. I am a young man with very old pensions—he is an old man with very young pensions—that's all."

"That's all!" indeed! and is that really all? Have the public at large no more right to enquire into the constitution of *pensions* than the people, as the mitred Rochester says, have in *respect to the "making of laws?"*—Is the dove-house of fancy pigeons, whether they be true in feather or not, to be thus unequivocally filled, and are all who have seized, or who have been even *enticed into a vacant hole*, to be subject to no future enquiries?—Why then, tear the pen from me at once: tear it also from every abler or weaker hand; let criticism, whenever a man be full gorged, or be desirous to force himself into the bed of luxury, be stripped at once of her lungs, her faculties, and her efforts; and let a legal act of that kind, stamped with the usual authorities, be exalted into a fresh service towards a then blind, and ignorant, and foolish nation; or, as you are pleased to speak of his

Grace's

Grace's product of land, "still more to stupify the dull English brain."

But, Sir, until that obtain (I hope, however, it never will obtain) we shall go on in the usual way. We shall think as we have been accustomed to think; we shall examine as we have been used to examine; we shall continue to decide according to "existing circumstances." That phrase I am sure you will like; I therefore proceed to say, that we shall do this as members of a free country: is it not then extremely hard, that the tongues of the Duke of Bedford and the Earl of Lauderdale (and about the justice or injustice of your pension) should alone be stopped—that a "jackall," I again use your own expression, may be suffered to slaver over and ultimately devour his delegated portion "of offal" without any enquiry how, or in what degree of comparison, he, among the rest, has hunted faithfully for the public and his employers?

In truth, Sir, without any invidious glance at your pension, every man's emolument, of whatever nature it may be, *together with its mode of acquisition*, is a fair and free subject of enquiry. To this no man, even of the most delicate feelings, I was about to add, no truly honest

honest

honest man, can justly object: but, if I qualify the latter epithet, I must follow it up by the observation that "*he who feels he deserves,*" will not be in the least angry about any investigation which can possibly be made. I, for my own part, should rather provoke to the combat: it must lead to the proof. And, so far should I be from harbouring any peevishness towards my adversaries (were they indeed personally my enemies) I should thank them for the opportunity they afforded for a complete vindication:—of proving, as you still think of yourself, that the state was still indebted and scanty of reward to me.

Let me here, by way of elucidation, draw a parallel between you and myself. I have hinted at such a circumstance, let it now be realized.—Do not start at the seemingly degradatory idea of comparing myself with you, but say at once, as once you would have said, "I also am but a man."—Man, indeed, should be compared with man. It is the only true criterion of excellence. You may extract your reasoning from Leviathans and Perrywinkles, but, with your leave, it is an undue degradation of the species.

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But, upon second thoughts, (for if I were to heel cocks for fighting, I would make their artificial spurs as much as possible alike) I will adopt your own method of argument. As you have made the Duke of Bedford a Leviathan, so, *mutatis mutandis*, you shall be my Leviathan and myself one of the Perrywinkles of the day.

Suppose then, Sir, (you see I deal in suppositions throughout) that I were about to be *pensioned*. Among other idle news, such a circumstance might possibly reach your "solitary abode." Unknown then, as I am to you, even by name, and "desolate" as you say you are, yet would not your patriotism or curiosity be excited? Would you not enquire who I was, what I was, and how I had deserved an exaltation into your pensionary and honourable corps? And if your researches induced you to think (we can none of us help thinking sometimes) that my ostensible merits were greatly, very superabundantly overpaid, or about to be so, would you not conceive yourself to be interested in the fact, or, at least, that you had a right to give your opinion of it, whether in public or in private?—Would you not even think it your duty, although no longer

longer a part of the legislative body of the realm (remember his Grace of Bedford is) to watch over the public purse?—Or would you conceive I had any right to complain, much less to spout forth a torrent of the most acrimonious language against you and your remotest Aborigines; for still, as you would contrive to have it believed, endeavouring to do good to the community at large, by combating an undeserved, at least a very exorbitant pension?

But, to relinquish the nauseous theme of egotism, I recur again more immediately to my subject. I have stated that his Grace of Bedford, in a *pensioned kind of view*, cannot be compared with yourself. This indeed is sincerely my opinion; and such further reasoning as I have to back it shall now immediately follow.

To proceed therefore candidly, I must allow with you, that his Grace possesses an almost princely fortune. For the sake of perspicuity, let us give it a name. You, if report be true, have only three thousand seven hundred a year, (all solid *pension* however) his Grace fifty thousand, or more. But what part of the Duke of Bedford's

fortune was to him a gift, or is now at the mercy of any man living or dead? *Your pension*, I speak with due deference to wiser heads, may remain, even for years, unpaid without any compulsion on your part; but not one acre, not one house, not even one shilling of what is due to his Grace can come under that predicament. Is not this a specific difference?—In fact, his Grace's *possessions* are far, very far above what could be granted, I think, to any one individual; and they are the produce, not of original grants (for any man, as I have before observed, may, although pensioned, leave his family beggars) but of the industry and frugality of his ancestors, in successive accumulation, without any new burden upon the public, but rather of increasing advantage, by finding a mean of subsistence for the laborious and suffering poor.

And here, Sir, I should take leave of you and your pamphlet, did not the concluding part, respecting war, and, if I understand you right, *perpetual war*, arrest my pen. You say (page 80) "Whatever his Grace may think of my demerits with regard to the war with regicide, he will find
my

my guilt confined to that alone. *He never shall, with any colour of reason, accuse me of being the author of a peace with regicide.*— Now, Sir, I am no regicide, no jacobin, no admirer of regicides any more than yourself; I am as much an enthusiast as you can be for my king, for the lords, for the commons, for the constitution of my country; I am no stickler for “Paine’s Rights of Man,” for I have endeavoured to write that book down:—but I am a lover of peace, I do feel an interest for all my fellow creatures in their respective ranks and station (not otherwise) and for their accustomed share of comfort and domestic happiness. These, war of every kind, in my humble judgment, must materially disturb. I know indeed personally, if that may be admitted for argument, that my own income during the war has been diminished at least one third in its value. It is, I believe, the case with many thousand others. It has affected all the middling and lower classes of people, not more by an unavoidable increase of taxes, than by the rise of every necessary in life. I hope, therefore, that neither my loyalty nor principles will be
impeached

impeached, because I prefer peace, as soon as it can be properly obtained, to what you seem to wish, an endless and eternal war.

For, an honourable peace out of the question, let me ask what you can have in view? *Cui bono?*—If indeed the past could be recalled: if the late unfortunate and good monarch of France (for good and unfortunate I always thought him) together with his queen and innocent offspring could resume existence,—then indeed a war, to preserve and render them happy as at first, might be carried on with spirit, with increasing animation, with unabating zeal. But—they are gone to that place “from whose bourne no traveller returns.” They want not now either pity or assistance. It is past;—and I hope they are in a more glorious, as well as a more peaceful clime. Why then war for the dead? Why send thousands after thousands to an early grave? Why make children fatherless, wives untimely clad “in widowed weed?” Why make many survivors, once comfortable in their respective stations, to endure the scanty meal for the gratification of a dropfical thirst—for what never can be recalled

*to think there would be no harm in
suffering all the suffering thousands of*

called? Are these really the sentiments of "a desolate old man," of "a man hardly to be classed with the living?"

The only motive for *now* carrying on the war, if I understand, or rightly deem of it, according to the sentiments of the executive department, is to bring on a safe and honourable peace with the powers, however criminal or guilty, that are. Why then should you wish to be *single* in blowing up the expiring embers of animosity, (say too of just animosity, nay, of profound abhorrence while it could be of any avail) to push back for ever that salutary object, that wound-healing balm of returning peace?

There was a time perhaps, putting humanity towards those who suffer most by war out of the question, when you would have thought, when you might have spoken otherwise. For, was there not a time, Sir, when you too, according to your rank in life and wishes, thought you had but *an inefficient income*? And had this never been remedied by *the ample pension you now enjoy*, would you have chosen to suffer a retrenchment of any of those innocent enjoyments to which you had been accustomed? Would
you

you *then* have been an advocate for perpetual war, smarting under and feeling its effect; or would you now, *pensioned and at ease as you are*, (excuse my only harsh expression, for if I have made use of any other, they are borrowed from your own pamphlet) would you now, I repeat, take your chance for a full share of it in famine, in desolation, in destruction, and the sword? For—turn over the volume of all history, and confute this fact if you can. I say again that war, however just, is the natural parent of famine, of desolation, of destruction, and the sword. What war can be adverted to where some of these calamities are not to be found? What war, without desolation to peaceful and unoffending individuals, as well as to those more intimately concerned, and who are paid for their chance of suffering? What war, without carnage and destruction; what war, without some degrees (may the degrees never arise above comparative, or mount up to the full standard of positive) of famine and want? What war, without the relentless fury of the sword?—From these, religion, you will excuse the unfashionable and undiplomatic phrase;

phrase; from these humanity; from these even policy, after a certain, perhaps necessary standard of evacuation, is compelled to turn her eyes.

And now, Sir, (in allusion to your idea of perpetual war, and not on account of what you have been pleased to say of the Duke of Bedford,) I will take one more glance at your pension. I fear indeed, while it has fortified you against any species of public distress, (for were all the necessities of life even ten times dearer than they are, it would not preclude you from their regular enjoyment,) it has also palsied the dictates of, I would hope, a naturally warm and susceptible heart. The rich Dives thought not of the miseries of a Lazarus. You now, perhaps, to use your own language, "have nothing to attend to but the lazy enjoyment of undisturbed possessions;" or, as you see not the distress of the middling and lower classes of people, your own well appointed board, (it is your own fault if it be otherwise) has lulled you into the idea that no such thing exists. "Poor rich man," (page 9,) as you style the Duke of Bedford in a supposed political deficiency of knowledge, compared with your own attainments, "poor

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rich

rich man," I say to you in comparison with myself in this case, you must indeed have shut yourself up in your Castle of plenty if these things have been hidden from your eyes. They are indeed so notorious, that I will not trouble you with any further elucidation.

I am now therefore about to take my leave. But, before I do this, you, perhaps, may be inclined in return to ask me, *Cui bono?* Why have I meddled with you or your pamphlet? I will tell you frankly. Not as a democrat or leveller, or despiser of opulence or dignities, that I totally disclaim; not as a check, (if I were vain enough to suppose such a thing was in my power of accomplishment) upon the executive department, in selecting objects for the grant of pensions, that also I most unequivocally disavow; not to cavil at the distinctions of rich and poor and a middle class of people, for I know the utility, as well as the necessity for each, in a well governed state, as a combination of mutual good; not therefore in the spirit of envy against your pension, (deserved or undeserved, "for I trouble not myself," as Sancho Pancha says, "to verify that,") but because I conceive your attack upon his Grace of Bedford's ancestors is
unjust

unjust in the first instance towards him; and may hereafter become a precedent for a similar attack upon every nobleman's and gentleman's family in the kingdom. For this did I take up the pen; and, if to defend, as far as my powers extend, any and every person, under such circumstances be a fault, I am ready to exclaim with Terence, "*Hæc mea culpa fa-teor fieri.*" I subjoin my address, and am, &c.

*Great Mitre-court,
Fenchurch-street, London.*

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